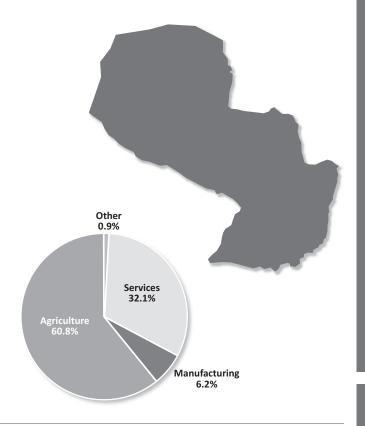
Paraguay

The Government of Paraguay has implemented social programs to combat child labor, including through cash transfer initiatives conditioned on removing children from exploitative work. However, a number of barriers exist in the effective reduction of the worst forms of child labor, including the limited allocation of resources for the enforcement of child labor laws. In addition, children continue to work in agriculture and domestic service where they may face a variety of occupational health and safety risks.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	10-14 yrs.	15.3
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	90.3
Combining Work and School	10-14 yrs.	12.1



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor 4699 in Paraguay, particularly in agriculture. Children, primarily boys and many of indigenous descent, work in the production of cotton. Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of soy, sesame, wheat, tobacco, manioc, peanuts, beans, sugarcane and stevia (a plant-based sweetener). 4700 Children working in agriculture may use hazardous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.

Children, primarily girls and many of indigenous descent, work as *criadas*, or child domestic servants who often work long hours and may be subject to physical and sexual exploitation by their employer. Children also work as street vendors and in markets, where risks include severe weather, accidents caused by proximity to vehicles, and vulnerability to criminal elements. 4702

Children, primarily boys, also work in the production of limestone, as well as in the manufacturing, construction, and transportation sectors which may require them to carry heavy loads and expose them to vehicular accidents and toxic dust.⁴⁷⁰³ Children also reportedly work in the production of bricks.⁴⁷⁰⁴

Children in Paraguay are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic service from rural to urban areas, including Asunción, Encarnación, and Ciudad del Este. Limited evidence suggests that in the Chaco region, indigenous children work raising cattle, a potentially dangerous activity, and sometimes work under conditions of debt bondage. The production of child pornography is a problem in Paraguay. Children reportedly smuggle drugs along the border with Brazil.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Child and Adolescent Code establishes 14 as the minimum age for work, and light work is permitted for children between the ages of 12 and 14. The Government, however, has not yet adopted regulations governing the nature and conditions of the light work permitted for children between ages 12 and 14.4708 A List of Work Endangering Children Decree 4951 prohibits children under age 18 from working in 26 broad classifications of work including work with dangerous tools, toxic substances, cattle, prolonged exposure to extreme climactic conditions, and work in public transport, public areas, mines, and domestic service. The Labor Code establishes fines for employing children under age 18 in dangerous forms of work.4709 However, research has not identified the specific legal provisions that stipulate penalties for violations of the List of Work Endangering Children or which ministries enforce the Decree. 4710 The age to which education is compulsory is 14.4711

MION	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	14
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Penal Code prohibits commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including recruiting, facilitating, and benefitting economically from child prostitution.⁴⁷¹² It also prohibits child pornography, including its production, distribution, and possession.⁴⁷¹³ Both the Constitution and the Penal Code prohibit slavery, forced labor, or analogous conditions. The Penal Code establishes penalties for forced labor.⁴⁷¹⁴

July 2009 revisions to the Penal Code increased penalties for the international trafficking of persons. Penalties are higher when a child is trafficked.⁴⁷¹⁵ However, current legislation does not comprehensively prohibit internal trafficking for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.⁴⁷¹⁶

The law establishes 18 as the minimum age for conscription into the military.⁴⁷¹⁷ No legislation to prohibit the recruitment of children for illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, could be identified.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and **Enforcement**

The National Council for Children and Adolescents (National Council) is the national coordinating body that establishes policies to protect children's rights and approves specific programs aimed at children and adolescents. The National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate the Exploitation of Children (CONAETI) is responsible for developing and implementing child labor policies. The It includes representatives from the Ministries of Labor, Health and Social Welfare, and Education and Culture, the Children's and Adolescents' Secretariat, the Social Action Secretariat, the Women's Secretariat, and civil society. The Children's society.

The Ministry of Justice and Labor is responsible for inspecting workplaces for child labor. It can

issue fines against businesses found employing children in work prohibited by the Labor Code. 4720 Child laborers identified by inspections are referred to other agencies for educational and social services. The Ministry of Justice and Labor employs 30 labor inspectors in Asunción and 9 inspectors in regional offices, who inspect for all types of labor violations, including child labor. 4721 This number of inspectors does not appear to be commensurate with the magnitude and scope of child labor in the country. Inspectors received training on child labor issues during the reporting period. 4722 The Ministry of Justice and Labor had just one vehicle to enforce labor laws. The Ministry of Justice and Labor indicated that it conducted 1,500 labor inspections in 2010.4723

The Public Ministry's Special Directorate to Fight the Trafficking of Persons and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is responsible for enforcing criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. It has a unit staffed by two prosecutors specializing in human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children who receive regular high-quality training on those topics. 4724 The Public Ministry also acts on referrals from the Ministry of Justice and Labor and the Child and Adolescent Secretariat in cases of dangerous and criminal child labor law violations. 4725 The National Police operates a unit that investigates cases of trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The unit employs 33 persons and operates in six cities. 4726 In February 2011, the National Police established a mandatory training on human trafficking.4727 Along with local prosecutors, the anti-trafficking unit at the Attorney General's Office's investigates and prosecutes human trafficking cases. In 2010, the Government of Paraguay opened investigations into more than 100 cases, mostly related to commercial sexual exploitation, and indicted 38 individuals.4728 It also investigated and charged a police officer and a public registry employee with possible complicity in separate cases of human trafficking. However, it did not convict any individuals for such crimes.4729

The Women's Secretariat and the Child and Adolescent Secretariat have offices dedicated to combating trafficking of children. The Women's Secretariat, the Child and Adolescent Secretariat, and the Public Ministry maintain hotlines to report cases of trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children and receive referrals from law enforcement agencies to provide social services to trafficking victims.⁴⁷³⁰

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In October 2010, the National Council approved a new National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Protection of Working Adolescents (2010 – 2015), which seeks to coordinate policies to combat the worst forms of child labor, provide access to free and quality education to child laborers and livelihood alternatives for their families, raise awareness of child labor, and improve enforcement of child labor laws. In August 2010, the Ministry of Justice and Labor approved an inter-institutional guide as part of the national plan to provide a coordinated institutional response for assisting child laborers. Ar32

In 2010, the government adopted the National Plan for Development 2010-2020, which includes goals for reducing child labor as part of broader efforts to reduce social exclusion and poverty.⁴⁷³³

In addition, Paraguay participates in MERCOSUR's *Niñosur* (Southern Child) Initiative, which aims to defend the rights of children and adolescents in the region. The initiative works to raise awareness of commercial sexual exploitation, improve country legal frameworks, and exchange best practices to tackle issues related to victim protection and assistance. ⁴⁷³⁴ During the reporting period, MERCOSUR member countries met to exchange good practices in systems to protect children and adolescents from commercial sexual exploitation as part of the *Niñosur* Initiative. ⁴⁷³⁵

Paraguay's National Tourism Office is part of the Joint Group for the Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism. The group, whose members also include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela, conducts prevention and awareness-raising campaigns. 4736

During the reporting period, the National Secretariat for Children and Adolescents signed an inter-institutional agreement with the National Bureau for Public Contracts to ensure that any goods or services procured by the government are not produced through child labor.⁴⁷³⁷

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Paraguay operated several programs to combat poverty and prevent/remove children in or at risk of the worst forms of child labor. One is the Embrace program which assists children engaged in exploitative urban work by providing their families with cash transfers conditioned on children's school attendance and withdrawal from work.⁴⁷³⁸ The program also operates 14 centers in 11 cities in Paraguay providing education and training, nutritional support, and access to health services. 4739 The program helped approximately 1,000 households and almost 2,000 children below age 14 during 2010.4740 The Embrace program is in the process of expanding to target child labor in more sectors. During the reporting period, the program launched a pilot project to remove children from trash picking in the area of Encarnación. 4741

A second program serves the Chaco region. It is also a cash transfer program conditioned on families' withdrawal of children from child labor and meeting education and health requirements and helped 700 families and approximately 1,300 children younger than age 14.4742

The Government also operates the *Tekopora* program, which provides conditional cash transfers to families in moderate to extreme poverty. Its primary objective is to increase school attendance among poor children. Currently, this initiative operates in 14 of the Paraguay's 17 departments. In 2011, the Government began to link the *Tekopora* program and the Embrace program to more effectively assist working children. These efforts will only reach a small portion of children affected by the worst forms of child labor, however.

Education programs also address child labor issues. For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture continues to require that all schools gather information on the working status of children and has implemented teacher trainings on child labor issues. 4744

The Government has also participated in a number of international-donor-funded projects to eradicate the worst forms of child labor in Latin America. During the reporting period, USDOL funded a \$6.75 million, 4-year project to promote collaboration across four countries—Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Paraguay—to combat the worst forms of child labor among socially excluded populations, including children of indigenous and Afro-descent. It began in 2009 and aims to withdraw 3,600 children from and prevent another 3,000 children from entering the worst forms of child labor through education interventions. 4745 The Government also participated in donorfunded initiatives and worked with local NGOs to combat child trafficking. The Government worked with the IDB on a \$1.2 million regional project to combat the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children in municipalities of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay and aims to strengthen local organizations and governments that work in prevention, detection, and victim assistance. 4746

The Government also provided some funding to NGOs to assist trafficking victims in Asuncion and Ciudad del Este, which furnish short-term legal, medical, and psychological services.⁴⁷⁴⁷

The Government of Paraguay has initiated a range of programs to combat child labor and its

causes. However, although the Government has implemented programs to address child labor in urban informal work, research found no evidence that the current programs reach children working in agriculture and domestic service.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Paraguay:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Revise the Penal Code to prohibit trafficking in persons within the national territory.
- Adopt legislation prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities, such as drug smuggling.
- Publicize the legislation that establishes sanctions for violations of the Decree 4951, the List of Work Endangering Children.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Increase resources available to the Ministry of Justice and Labor in the form of vehicles and personnel to conduct child labor inspections.
- Ensure that human trafficking cases are resolved and that guilty individuals are convicted.

IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS:

- Expand the Tekopora and Embrace programs to provide assistance to more families and children affected by the worst forms of child labor.
- Create and expand social programs to reach children working in domestic service and agriculture.

- ⁴⁶⁹⁹ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates, 2005-2011. Data on working children and school attendance are from 2005. Data on children combining working and schooling are from 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.
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